

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6245

As Passed House - Amended:

March 3, 2004

Title: An act relating to residency teacher certification partnership programs.

Brief Description: Relating to residency teacher certification partnership programs.

Sponsors: By Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Zarelli, Regala, Winsley and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/25/04, 2/26/04 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 3/3/04, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill (As Amended by House)

- Creates a fourth route to alternative certification for people with baccalaureate degrees who are employed as substitute teachers or who have conditional teaching certificates.
- Repeals the program expiration date of June 30, 2005.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; McDermott, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Tom, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Cox, Haigh, Hunter, McMahan, Rockefeller and Santos.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

In 2001, the Legislature created three alternative routes for teacher certification. Each route focuses on increasing the number of teachers in shortage and high need areas due to subject matter or geographic location. Routes one and two are available to classified instructional employees who are employed by a school district. Route three is available to people who are not employed by the school district, but may have an emergency substitute certification. There are additional eligibility requirements for each route.

The educational program for the different alternative certification routes vary based on the existing education level of the candidate. Route one candidates, who have an associate degree, must complete their baccalaureate degree and a mentored internship. Route two candidates, who already have a baccalaureate degree, must complete a mentored internship and training and coursework offered at a local site in collaboration with a higher education institution. Route three candidates, who have a baccalaureate degree, must attend an intensive summer teaching academy, followed by a full-year of employment by a school district in a mentored internship (and, if necessary, a second summer academy).

A partnership grant program and a conditional scholarship program which support the alternative route certification program have been funded by the Legislature since the creation of the alternative certification program. The partnership grant program provides funds to participating districts to assist the district in partnering with higher education teacher preparation programs and may be used to provide stipends to the mentor teacher. The Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB), with support from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, selects the districts that receive the funds based on a list of factors included in the statute. The PESB selects teacher candidates to receive conditional scholarships but the program is administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

The alternate teacher certification program expires June 30, 2005.

Under the 2001 federal No Child Left Behind Act, beginning in 2005, all teachers who teach in core academic subjects (English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography) must be "highly qualified." "Highly qualified" means that the teacher has full certification (not an emergency or limited certificate) and has passed a state test or demonstrates competence based on an objective uniform standard of evaluation.

Summary of Amended Bill:

A fourth alternative route for teacher certification is created. Route four is available to people who are employed in the district, hold a baccalaureate degree and hold a conditional teaching certificate or emergency substitute certificate. Eligibility for individuals who hold an emergency substitute certificate is changed from route three to route four. Additional eligibility requirements are provided. The educational program for route four candidates consists of an intensive summer teacher academy, followed by a full-year employed by a school district in a mentored internship.

Partnership grants are available to districts that operate a route four program and conditional scholarships are available to route four teacher certification candidates. The conditional scholarship may be used to pay tuition, fees and other educational expenses.

The expiration date for the program is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The bill will provide a way for teachers with conditional certification to obtain full certification without quitting their jobs and returning to college. It also helps people with emergency substitute certificates obtain full teacher certification. The Institute for Public Policy (the Institute) has completed a study of the Alternative Routes to Certification Program. The average participant is 41 years old. The participants are more likely to be male and come from more diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds than is true for participants in traditional preparation programs. In addition, more of the participants intend to teach in middle school and more have advanced degrees than is true of participants in traditional preparation programs. When surveying the mentor teachers of program participants, the Institute discovered that 72 percent of the participants are better prepared to enter the classroom than students prepared through traditional preparation programs. And, an additional 18 percent are at least as well prepared as those who participate in traditional programs. The legislation will allow a successful program to continue. It will also help teachers meet the state's definition of highly qualified teacher, an important component of the "No Child Left Behind Act of 2001."

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Zarelli, prime sponsor; Senator Regala, sponsor; Jennifer Wallace, Professional Educator Standards Board; and Lorraine Wilson, Tacoma Public Schools.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.